



CARMEN TROESSER, DESERT NEWS

Pony Express ride turns out to be a real Tripp

Mike Tripp of Murray runs his 2-mile leg of the Pony Express re-enactment ride Saturday just west of Simpson Springs in Tooele County. The ride started in St. Joseph, Mo., and will continue to Sacramento, Calif. The Tripp family had three generations riding on the trail this year. Tripp's father, Bob Tripp, and Mike's son, Marshael Tripp, also rode with the mail bag for a leg of the trip. The original Pony Express began in the

1850s. News-hungry Utahns, separated by hundreds of miles from Eastern and Western population centers, were thrilled by the prospect of getting communications in less than 10 days. Thanks to the hard-riding couriers of yesteryear, the Wasatch Front, accustomed to getting word of happenings three months afterward, was brought within six days of the Pacific Coast and seven days of the Atlantic.

care there is one of the things that shocked her when she became a member a little more than two years ago.

Another authority member, Randy Johnson, also takes issue with the idea of being "resource driven and spoon-fed" and says such talk makes him "extremely offended."

"I can tell you from my experience," he said, "we are not resource driven. When we deliberate, we deliberate with the question of what's best for this kid every single time. If it costs the state some money, so be it."

One of the reasons that last week's recommendation included a plan for an independent board is to quiet criticism that the authority cannot operate with autonomy under the direction of Youth Corrections.

Nelsen said previous changes, like having the governor make the appointments, came from criticism about the authority being under the thumb of Youth Corrections.

"Instead of minimum sentencing, which would clog up the system even more, there needs to be a full-time parole board appointed by the governor," Nelsen said. "Whether a kid is locked up for six months or 12 months, they're all still coming out."

One of Nelsen's concerns expressed during a May subcommittee hearing was the lack of con-

trolled up and some way to hold the teen accountable for his actions.

"It's a public safety issue," Valdez said. The current system, with its high recidivism rate, "is a fraud on the public."

Nelsen said if Youth Corrections stays with the assertion that its main goal is treatment for the young offenders, then it must turn them around sooner.

"We're a treatment facility," he said. "If we can't turn a kid around in 12 months, then you're just warehousing them."

And that's something the state could do a lot cheaper without treatment, Johansen said at the May meeting. He referred to cheaper options, which he jokingly said could include "a Motel 6 and a shotgun."

"Youth Corrections doesn't believe in incarceration," Johansen said. "They deliberately underbuild. Their philosophy is 'treat the kid, don't punish him.'"

But Johansen believes being lenient with a young offender not only harms his victims and his community but himself. A teen usually isn't locked up until he commits several crimes, and he's severely delinquent by the time he gets locked up or gets treatment.

"It's not fair to them," he said. "In fairness to the kids we ought to have some accountability in the juvenile system."

with a good heart. "He can control (the alcohol abuse) in his life, he's got a real good chance of making it."

Another boy appears in shackles for a revocation hearing. He's being pulled off the street for technicalities, his parole officer says, because he wanted to get the boy some help before he got into more trouble.

The authority decides the boy will go into a community-based program instead of going home. It was Problems at home were causing him to break some of the conditions of his parole. His parole officer hopes the group home will offer him stability that his home can't provide right now.

Consuelo Alires asks one of the boys what he dreams about. He looks at her as if he doesn't understand, and she asks him what he and his friends talk about when they discuss the future.

"When I was little I had dreams," he says, pausing. "My friends, we never talked about jobs. . . . We talked about the movie 'Menace to Society' . . . he (the hero) get killed at the end, but oh well, it's going to happen sooner or later."

He looks down and then back at her. Her eyes have never left him.

"Maybe I'd like to be a truck driver," he offers.

"Good," she smiles. "That's a good job, but it'll be hard to do without an education."